

The commissioners who revise our statutes will have a wonderful time when they find that this bill may be cited as something or other and in four or five places says that this part may be cited as another bill. It is a terrible mess. Again let me say that what is wrong with this measure is that it removes parliamentary control of the government. We are given an omnibus document just like the omnibus appropriations bills and we do not get down at all to details.

● (8:30 p.m.)

I agree with the proposition I read in an editorial which appeared in the *Ottawa Journal* during the last week or so about the point of order we debated when this bill was first called. We would be foolish, as Members of Parliament, to go the other way and say that every last item and every last detail must be contained in a separate bill. Surely what we need is a government with a sense of its responsibility to Parliament, one that puts things before us in reasonable proportion. That is not the case with this bill and it is not the case with many pieces of legislation that are brought before us.

We have had all these experiences in respect of the question period, the estimates and omnibus bills of this type. Now we have, in the name of efficiency, in the name of technocracy and in the name of expediency the plea that once and for all we do away with the necessity of the government having to come to Parliament to restructure its affairs. Its affairs are not its affairs; they are Parliament's affairs and they are the affairs of the people of Canada. I think this is very important.

I said when I started that there had been many lively and scintillating speeches today, that I would not try to match that approach but that I was deadly serious, and I am. I do not think it represents good government, I do not think it leads to a good relationship with Parliament, and I do not think it is good for the running of the country for the government to bring in a bill like this which puts the good and the bad together. I refer to the arrangement for public servants who want to retire, coupled with the dictatorial right to push people out in the cold with inadequate pensions whether they want to retire or not. Likewise, I do not think it is good to lessen the control of Parliament over the affairs of government. The members of the government are here for a period of time because the people of Canada put them here by the way they voted. They put them here to run the store. But they do not own it and they should not act the way they are in respect of Bill C-207.

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, this bill has already been described in many ways. One of the polite terms applied to it was that it is a grab-bag. I think this description is about as appropriate for this bill as it is for the government's policies as a whole. Here we have a situation where the government is putting forward one or two good proposals and then filling the bill with a lot of junk, much of which is harmful, and attempting to bull it through the House of Commons and Parliament. An indication of the arrogance of the government lies not only in the stuff it piles

*Government Organization Act, 1970*

into the bill but in the fact that so far at least it has not even bothered to reply to the serious and earnest criticisms put forward. The government sits in silence and simply counts upon its troops to force the bill through the House regardless of criticism.

**Mr. Bell:** The minister is laughing.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Events that took place in this House this afternoon have again shown how this government intends to act at the cabinet level and how it intends to deal with Parliament and the country. I shall have further comments to make on this matter in the course of my remarks on the bill. Let me remind the government that the mere fact of setting up a structure is no guarantee of effective action. This bill has many faces, some pleasant, some progressive, some that I think represent honest attempts at improvement, but others much less than that. We can, for example, readily support the principle of creating a federal department of the environment. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said, virtually every member of the House has been for some time asking for such a department. But structures are no guarantee of effective action.

With regard to pollution, I notice there is no mention in this bill of any mechanism for co-operation between the federal government and the provinces. This would appear to be for the government's convenience; it would seem to be the kind of omission that could serve as an escape-hatch. The Lord knows that this government is making a habit of using escape-hatches these days. At least the first part of the bill dealing with pollution, even though indirectly, does deal with a matter of substance. Pollution control is one of the great challenges facing us, and the creation of a structure which might permit action in this field is certainly of importance.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre spoke this evening about some of the compulsory retirement features of the bill. I thoroughly agree with him that it is nonsense to suggest it is simply reciprocal to allow the government the right to retire a man simply because the man is given the privilege of retiring. The change providing for compulsory retirement hardly seems consistent with the kind of security of career which Parliament has been trying to establish over the years.

As to the provisions of Bill C-207 in general, once we leave pollution and the question of retirement—which was discussed so ably by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—we enter the realm of forms and structures, leaving substance far behind. In this way I think the bill symbolizes the attitude of the government, because it is a government which feels much more at home dealing with structures and forms which it can manipulate than it does in dealing with the substance of problems. This opinion regarding the attitude of the government of the day is not confined to the members of my party. I noticed that the president of the Young Liberals of Canada, speaking generally of Canadian political parties, including his own, in Halifax said that they should spend much less time on structures and more on issues.